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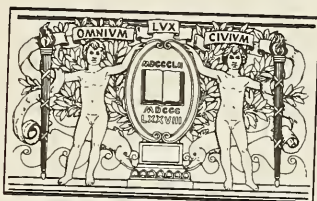
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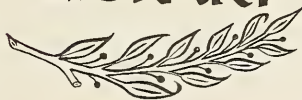
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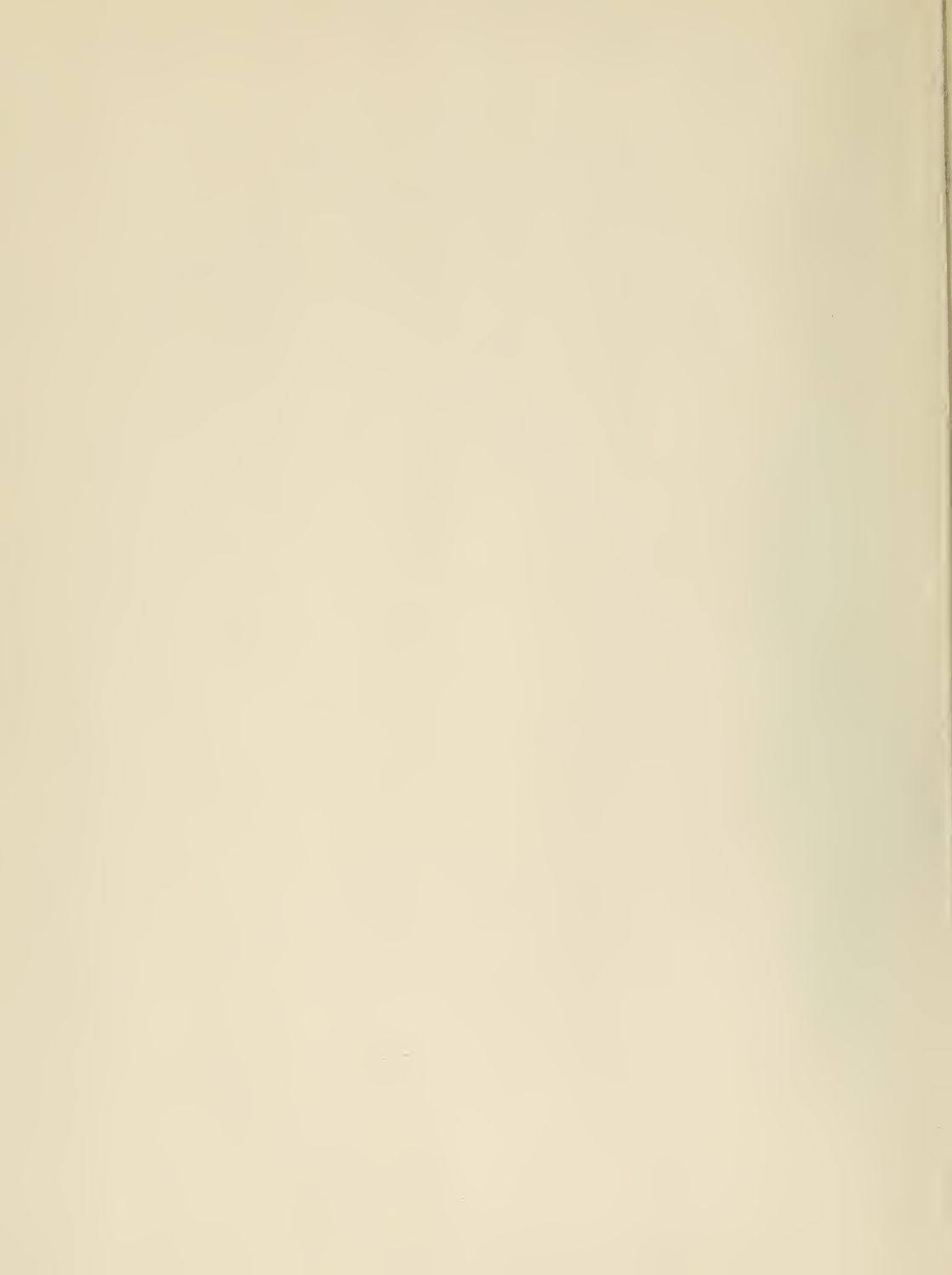






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Boston's Branch Library System

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
DEPARTMENT
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



Adams Street Branch Library

Photo by Robert J. Keller



THOMAS E. MCCORMICK

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

MARY T. DOWNEY
SECRETARY

OFFICE OF

THE CITY PLANNING BOARD

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September 15, 1955.

Honorable John B. Hynes,
Mayor of Boston,
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Mayor:

The City Planning Board submits herewith a report on Boston's branch library system - a plan for its development.

The General Plan for Boston, published in December 1951, has many phases which require more detailed attention. This study of the branch library system is one such phase.

The report is both an evaluation of Boston's existing branch libraries and a long-range plan for the location and construction of future branch libraries. The recommended plan has been formulated in conformance with accepted branch library principles and standards. The effectuation of this plan will allow Boston to maintain a useful and economically efficient branch library system, one that will provide maximum benefit at minimum cost.

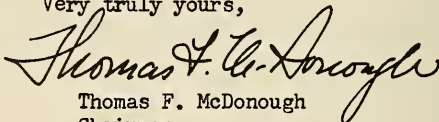
The Planning Board intends that this report in addition to serving as one of the detailed elements of a General Plan, will serve as a basis for capital improvement programming of branch libraries.

The Planning Board here acknowledges with thanks the advice and assistance freely given by the staff of the Library Department.

Recognition should also be given to Mr. Timothy J. Regan and Mr. H. Daland Chandler, a sub-committee of the Planning Board, who gave of their time and effort in the final formulation of the report.

Finally, credit is due to the General Plan Division of the Planning Department for their work in developing the program here presented.

Very truly yours,


Thomas F. McDonough
Chairman

A PLAN FOR
**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF BOSTON'S BRANCH
LIBRARY SYSTEM**

**Boston, Massachusetts
September, 1955**

The principal objective of the City Planning Board is to work out and keep up to date for use in the affairs of Boston a comprehensive conception of the city, its resources, possibilities, and needs. In order to accomplish this, a master plan for the improvement and development of the city involving basic research, analysis, and design is required. The master plan, consisting of many separate plans, is developed in stages and must be flexible in order to keep pace with the growth of the city. This Library Report, one element of a master plan for Boston, typifies the planning process.

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Egleston Square Branch Library

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the findings of a study of Boston's branch libraries. The purpose of the study has been to formulate a long-range plan of branch library development. Such a plan is hereby submitted as a guide to the reconstruction of the public library system in order to adequately and efficiently serve the people of Boston.

The Boston Public Library possesses a proud history of outstanding service to the people of this city. To uphold and improve this record consideration must be given to the needed adjustment of the facilities from which the service is distributed, the branch library buildings.

During the course of the next twenty or twenty-five years many of our branch facilities will require reconstruction and replacement. The opportunity now exists to plan this expected construction activity so that the best possible branch library system evolves as the final product.

In simplest terms, the best possible library system is one that provides maximum benefit at minimum cost. On the one hand recognition must be given to the value, and indeed the necessity, of having a good public library accessible to every citizen of Boston. On the other hand lies the inescapable fact that public expenditures must be kept within proper bounds. A plan for the development of branch libraries must properly reconcile these two basic but divergent precepts.



The Adams Schoolhouse formerly
on Downtown Mason Street



A preliminary study of the Boylston Street elevation, showing
the new addition and the original Central Library Building.

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Boston Public Library first opened on May 2, 1854, in two rooms on the ground floor of the Adams Schoolhouse on downtown Mason Street. Because of the Library's rapid growth and increased use it soon became necessary to have a larger building. A site was acquired on the Boylston Street lot now occupied by the Colonial Theatre, and a new building was constructed, the first to be devoted entirely to public library use. Within ten years this structure, too, became inadequate and overcrowded; operations were hampered by lack of space. In 1878 efforts were begun to provide a new and more spacious structure. Land on Dartmouth Street was granted by the Commonwealth, and in 1895 the present Central Library, first of the monumental public library buildings to be erected in America, was completed and opened.*

Today the Central Library is the headquarters for all library operations. The building in Copley Square houses the bulk of library materials (including vast reference facilities, rare books, prints, special fine arts, and music and science collections) and is the heart of the administrative, business, circulation, and reference phases of the library's activities.

It is the prime responsibility of the Library Department to make these many cultural, educational, and recreational facilities available to all the people. Fulfilling this responsibility requires, in addition to the Central

* - Reflections on the Centennial Anniversary of the Boston Public Library by David McCord - Centennial Commission, Boston Public Library - 1953

* - Building a Great Future upon a Glorious Past - Centennial Commission, Boston Public Library - 1953

Library, a system of branch libraries well distributed throughout the city.

Today Boston's branch library system consists of thirty-three branch libraries and two bookmobiles. The locations of these facilities (except for the bookmobile stops) are shown on the map on page 13.

During the past four years changes have occurred in this branch system in the form of two new library buildings. The future will see many more changes, for new buildings must replace old. The entire branch library system must become more useful and efficient in this inevitable reconstruction process. This can be accomplished if the new branches are properly located, well designed, and in conformity with the branch library planning standards mentioned below.



Proposed South Boston Branch Library
(Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson, and Abbott-Architects)

THE BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEM

To evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the existing physical plant of the Boston Public Library System, and to guide the preparation of a development plan, a series of widely accepted standards have been utilized. These standards have been formulated by the American Library Association for just such evaluating and planning purposes.* They have been accepted as general guides for this study but applied cautiously and in recognition of the population, land use pattern, and other characteristics peculiar to the City of Boston.

These standards are described below and are accompanied by a brief appraisal of the existing branch library system. The discussion is in three parts; the first dealing with the appropriate area and population to be served by branch facilities, the second with the most effective branch library locations, and the third with the library structures, their adequacy and design.

Service Area and Population

Each branch library should serve an area within a radius of a mile to a mile and one half, and a minimum population of 25,000 to 50,000.

Library use can be encouraged by supplying facilities within distances people will travel. At the same time facilities are to be justified on an

* - American Library Association, Post War Standards for Public Libraries, Chicago, 1943.

operational and economical basis by serving the aforesaid minimum number of people.

In Boston, due to high population densities and land use characteristics, the problem is not so much maintaining proper travel distances as it is providing a system in which each branch serves enough persons to justify its maintenance and operational costs.

Boston's existing thirty-three branch libraries now serve a city-wide average of 25,000 persons each. Six (the Brighton, Charlestown, East Boston, Mattapan, South End, and Uphams Corner libraries) are so located as to potentially serve over 30,000 persons; the Roslindale Square Branch can serve nearly 40,000. However, eleven of our branches can at best serve not more than 20,000 persons, and five of these (the Lower Mills, Jefferies Point, Neponset, Tyler Street, and Phillips Brooks Branches) because of poor locations, can serve not more than 10,000. In fact the Phillips Brooks Branch serves fewer than 5,000 persons, lowest in the entire system and well below the minimum stated above.

This era of steadily increasing mobility partly justifies a nationwide trend away from many small and less efficient branch facilities toward fewer larger structures. The facts and figures presented above suggest that Boston's branch system can be improved in the direction of fewer facilities which offer a more complete line of service.

TABLE I

The following table shows the circulation for each of the branches in 1952, 1953, and 1954; and an estimate of the resident population in the service area of each branch.

Branch Library	Est. Population Served (in thousands)	1952 Circulation*	1953 Circulation*	1954 Circulation*
Adams Street	20-25	123,600	116,059	119,458
Allston	25-30	72,646	74,260	78,249
Brighton	30-35	59,994	56,836	59,807
Charlestown	30	71,240	62,688	64,389
City Point	20-25	43,874	38,146	36,543
Codman Square	25-30	130,541	128,704	134,186
Connolly	15-20	86,344	81,903	81,023
Dorchester	25-30	69,666	63,761	64,471
East Boston	30-35	60,275	53,962	53,402
Egleston Square	25-30	(1)	(1)	134,603
Faneuil	10-15	44,988	47,537	51,262
Hyde Park	25-30	67,274	61,817	72,066
Jamaica Plain	15-20	70,031	68,439	69,470
Jefferies Point	8-10	26,674	25,566	25,104
Lower Mills	6-8	41,174	41,096	40,527
Mattapan	30-35	102,079	100,202	109,063
Memorial	25-30	64,360	48,242	41,480
Mt. Bowdoin	25-30	73,728	76,257	75,986
Mt. Pleasant	20-25	39,469	35,080	36,901
Neponset	6-8	38,280	35,853	34,729
North End	15-20	37,917	38,077	32,963
Orient Heights	15-20	36,464	26,312	31,159
Parker Hill	25-30	62,932	64,759	67,330
Phillip Brooks	2.5-3.5	22,655	21,723	17,673
Roslindale	35-40	136,465	136,328	145,556
South Boston	15-20	66,255	61,927	63,328
South End	30-35	58,381	52,739	48,888
Tyler Street	6-8	12,211	13,225	11,880
Uphams Corner	30-35	122,939	103,130	94,170
Washington Village	15-20	79,646	76,236	76,756
West End	25-30	102,533	83,118	74,397
West Roxbury	25-30	112,577	110,921	117,893

(1) Branch Library opened July 8, 1953.

* Statistics from Library Department records.

Location

Branch libraries must be easily accessible. Each branch should be in, or adjacent to, major shopping and community centers which daily attract the residents of the surrounding area. They should be on, or near, major streets to attract motor vehicle and mass transportation users. In the best interests of the community as a whole, as well as the users of the library in particular, each facility should provide adequate parking facilities.

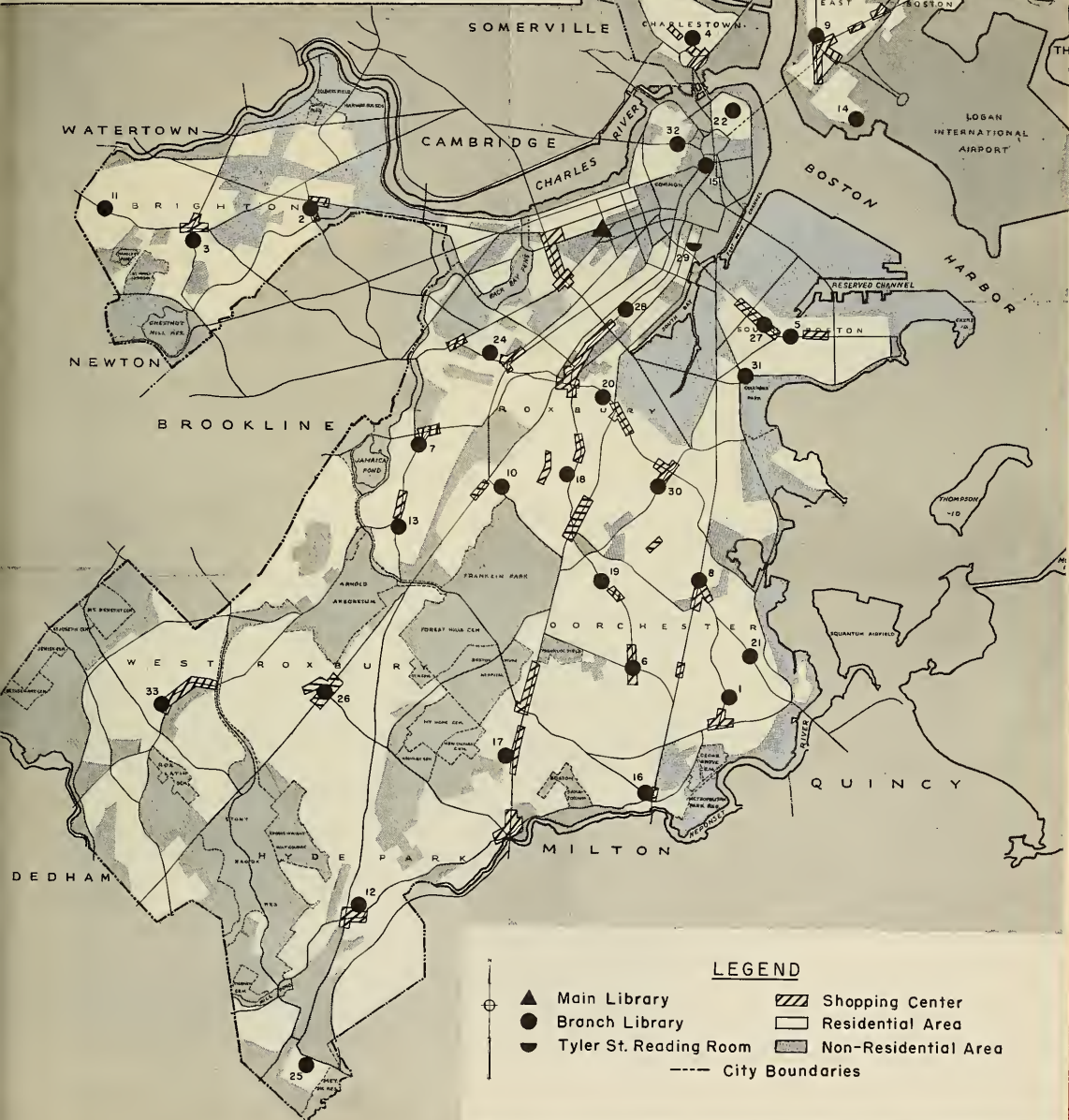
These locational guides deserve strong emphasis in the planning of future libraries. Facilities which are properly located are more effectively and fully used and justify the capital expenditures necessary for their purchase.

The Boston branch library system conforms reasonably well in this regard if a liberal interpretation of the standard is applied. More than half of our branches are near shopping facilities. (See map on opposite page). However, many of these are possibly not near enough, or are near minor rather than major shopping centers. Such unfortunate conditions are not, in themselves, adequate justification for relocating the facilities, but instead indicate where future locational improvements can be made during the reconstruction process.

EXISTING LIBRARY LOCATIONS

BRANCH LIBRARIES

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Adams Street | 12. Hyde Park | 23. Orient Heights |
| 2. Alletton | 13. Jamaica Plain | 24. Parker Hill |
| 3. Brighton | 14. Jefferies Point | 25. Phillips Brooks |
| 4. Charlestown | 15. Kirstein Memorial | 26. Roslindale |
| 5. City Point | 16. Lower Mills | 27. South Boston |
| 6. Codman Square | 17. Mattapan | 28. South End |
| 7. Connolly | 18. Memorial | 29. Tyler Street |
| 8. Dorchester | 19. Mt. Bowdoin | 30. Uphams Corner |
| 9. East Boston | 20. Mt. Pleasant | 31. Washington Village |
| 10. Egleston Square | 21. Neponset | 32. West End |
| 11. Faneuil | 22. North End | 33. West Roxbury |



LEGEND

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| ▲ Main Library | ▨ Shopping Center |
| ● Branch Library | □ Residential Area |
| ◐ Tyler St. Reading Room | ■ Non-Residential Area |
| --- City Boundaries | |



Children's Section Of Uphams Corner
Branch Library (library to be replaced)



Children's Section Of Adams Street Branch Library

Structural Adequacy

Library facilities should be housed in separate buildings which are structurally adequate and of functional and attractive interior and exterior design. Each major branch library should contain: (1) separate reference and reading areas for children, teenagers, and adults; (2) adequate work and storage areas; and (3) a utility room-lecture hall facility.

The Boston branch library system contains many examples of poor physical conditions that deserve improvement. Outstanding are: (1) the older buildings which are difficult and expensive to properly heat, light, and maintain (and in some cases require over-all renovation); (2) the many buildings which have grossly inadequate amounts of interior space; and (3) those libraries which are not located in separate buildings.

The existing system contains many libraries located in buildings housing other activities. For the most part these branches occupy quarters not designed or originally intended for library purposes. Outstanding examples are the Roslindale and Mt. Pleasant Branches which are located directly beneath gymnasiums. The resultant noise and vibrations are obviously incompatible with library activities. The Uphams Corner Branch is also an example of inappropriate use of physical facilities. The children's section is located in a submerged section of the basement originally used as a swimming pool. This particular situation not only makes it extremely awkward for the librarian but actually hazardous for the children.

TABLE II

The following table shows the ownership and age of the buildings in the Branch Library System.

Library	Type of Building#	Date of Construc- tion	Date Occupied ✓ by Library
Adams Street	Library	1952	1952
Allston	Rented	--	1929
Brighton	Library	1874	1874
Charlestown	Library	1913	1913
City Point	Municipal Bldg.	1913	1914
Codman Square	Municipal Bldg.	1904	1905
Connolly	Library	1932	1932
Dorchester	Municipal Bldg.	1875	1915
East Boston	Library	1914	1914
Egleston Square	Library	1953	1953
Faneuil	Library	1932	1932
Hyde Park	Library	1912	1912
Jamaica Plain	Library	1911	1911
Jefferies Point	Library	1870	1932
Lower Mills	Library	1871	1883 ✓
Mattapan	Library	1931	1931
Memorial	High School	1926	1926
Mt. Bowdoin	Rented	--	1929
Mt. Pleasant	Municipal Bldg.	1913	1915
Neponset	Rented	--	1947
North End	Library	1828	1912
Orient Heights	Rented	--	1929
Parker Hill	Library	1931	1931
Phillip Brooks	Rented	--	1896
Roslindale	Municipal Bldg.	1916	1918
South Boston	Rented	--	1950
South End	Municipal Bldg.	1921	1923
Tyler Street	Municipal Bldg.	1902	1915
Uphams Corner	Municipal Bldg.	1903	1904
Washington Village	Housing Project	1941	1942
West End	Library	1806	1896
West Roxbury	Library	1922	1922

- Statistics from Library Department Records.

Nearly one-half of the existing structures can be classified as physically incapable of housing modern, efficient library operations. These must be replaced with attractive buildings containing enough space to meet the requirements of the section of the city they are to serve.

The evaluation concludes that the present branch library system contains many facilities that do not conform to one or more of the above mentioned standards dealing with service area and population, location, and structural adequacy. These non-conformities seriously curtail the benefits to society that can accrue from extensive use of library facilities. Such situations can be corrected through a program of branch library reconstruction. A plan describing the required improvements is presented on the following pages.



Allston Branch Library (to be replaced)

BRANCH LIBRARIES

Adams Street
Allston
Brighton
Charlestown
Codman Squares
Connolly
Dorchester
East Boston
Egleston Square

11. Faneuil
12. Hyde Park
13. Jamaica Plain
15. Kirstein Memorial
16. Lower Mills
17. Mattapan
19. Grove Hall
20. Dudley
22. North End

23. Orient Heights
24. Parker Hill
26. Roslindale
27. South Boston
28. South End
30. Uphams Corner
31. Washington Village
32. West End
33. West Roxbury



LEGEND



- ▲ Main Library
- Library To Be Retained
- Library To Be Constructed
- ▨ Shopping Center
- Residential Area
- ▨ Non-Residential Area
- City Boundaries

RECOMMENDED BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEM

The recommendations of this study are in conformity with the standards and principles outlined in the preceding section as they adapt themselves to the characteristics of Boston. The recommendations outlined below and summarized in map form on the opposite page describe how the branch library system should be improved upon during the next twenty years. Further explanation of the individual recommendations may be found in the appendix starting on page (30).

A consolidated branch system of twenty-seven libraries (and three book-mobiles) is proposed. Of the twenty-seven branches fourteen exist and are to be retained, thirteen are new.

Branch Libraries to be Retained

The branch libraries which are structurally sound, sufficiently useful, and are to be retained, are:

- . Adams Street
- . Charlestown
- . Codman Square
- . Connolly
- . East Boston
- . Egleston Square
- . Faneuil
- . Jamaica Plain
- . Kirstein Memorial
- . Mattapan
- . North End
- . Parker Hill
- . Washington Village
- . West Roxbury

◀ PROPOSED LIBRARY LOCATIONS

The retention of three of these, the Faneuil, North End, and Washington Village branches, deserve explanation.

. The Faneuil branch in Brighton now serves (and is expected to serve in the future) an area containing nearly fifteen thousand persons, substantially less than the previously mentioned minimum requirements. The library is well used, however, especially by children, and the total circulation of books has been steadily increasing. In addition, the building is an attractive one and owned by the Library Department. For these reasons the retention of the Faneuil Branch appears justified.

. The North End branch also serves less than twenty-five thousand persons. The library should be retained in order to continue to provide a particularly valuable cultural service for a densely populated and physically isolated residential area. The building is structurally adequate and apparently will not require major repairs or reconstruction for some time.

. The Washington Village branch serves an area containing between fifteen and twenty thousand persons. Although this number is also low, the circulation and use of the library is relatively high and justifies its retention. In fact, the service area and the use of this branch are expected to increase upon the effectuation of other contemplated library improvements in South Boston.

Proposed Branch Libraries to be Constructed

Thirteen new branches are proposed in this plan. Nine of these thirteen new buildings are to replace libraries now in rented quarters or municipal buildings; four are to replace existing buildings owned by the library. All are to supplant existing facilities that are poorly located, insufficiently

used, or impaired by inadequate structural conditions which will cause unnecessary maintenance and operational costs.

The thirteen proposed branches are as follows:

- . A large modern library is being constructed in South Boston to replace the existing City Point and South Boston branches.

- . A new building on Dudley Street near the Dudley Street Terminal shopping center to replace the Mt. Pleasant Branch.

- . A new library in the southeastern part of the Grove Hall shopping center to replace the Mt. Bowdoin Branch.



Mt. Bowdoin Branch Library (to be replaced)



West Roxbury Branch Library



**Fields Corner Branch
Library (to be replaced)**

. A new building to replace the Roslindale Branch as near as possible to the present location in Roslindale Square.

. A new modern library to replace the West End branch near the present location on Cambridge St. (as part of the proposed urban redevelopment project).

. A new library to replace the Dorchester Branch on a site nearer to the Fields Corner shopping area.

. A new building on the north side of the M.T.A. tracks near the intersection of Bennington and Saratoga Streets to replace the Orient Heights Branch.

. A new library to replace the Allston Branch as near to the existing site as possible.

. A new building to be located near, or in, the Brighton shopping center to replace the Brighton Branch.

. A new library to replace the Lower Mills Branch on a site to be determined by further study.

. A new building (on or near the present site) to replace the Uphams Corner Branch.

. A new library to replace the South End Branch.

. A new building to replace the Hyde Park Branch.

Existing Branch Libraries to be Eliminated.

Seven of the existing branch libraries are to be eliminated. Three of these seven are to be abandoned because the circulation and population served do not justify their maintenance and operational expenses. The areas can be adequately serviced by other library facilities. The three are:

- . The Jefferies Point Branch,
- . The Phillip Brooks Branch, and
- . The Neponset Branch.

The other four branches are to be abandoned for the following reasons:

. The need for the Memorial Branch in Roxbury will be so greatly reduced with the completion of the new libraries at the Dudley Street Terminal and the Grove Hall shopping centers that its operation would no longer be justified.

. The Tyler Street Reading Room is maintained as a temporary convenience for the people of that area. The population will be drastically reduced with the construction of the Central Artery, the New York Streets Redevelopment Project, and the proposed expansion of the New England Medical Center, and the library will not be needed. The area should be served by bookmobile.

. The City Point and South Boston Branches are to be abandoned when the new large modern library in South Boston is completed.

The construction of the Columbia Point Housing Project poses a unique problem. Although the project is in an extremely isolated location, the amount of population to be served does not justify the expenditure for a new branch library building. It is recommended that the area be serviced by mobile facility. In addition, arrangements should be made to use the housing project auditorium for story hours, movies, and other features of the Library Department's educational and cultural program. Should these facilities prove to be inadequate then space could be made available in the project for a library similar to the Washington Village Branch.

RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The construction of all thirteen new library buildings recommended herein cannot, and should not, take place immediately. Some of the proposed improvements are not necessary now; others are. The construction schedule outlined below indicates the priority which this study attaches to the erection of each new building. However, this schedule should not be considered rigid or inflexible for unforeseen circumstances or conditions may arise in the future necessitating changes in the construction program.

Those improvements which potentially will cause the greatest increase in use of our public library system and simultaneously cause the greatest economies (through less rental and unnecessary maintenance expenditures) have been scheduled for early construction. Those improvements which are less urgent are scheduled for construction during later years.

The twenty year plan has been divided into two development stages.

Stage One:

Those new branch libraries which should be constructed during the initial period are:

- . The South Boston Branch,
- . The Dudley Branch,
- . The Grove Hall Branch,
- . The Roslindale Branch,
- . The West End Branch,
- . The Fields Corner Branch,
- . The Orient Heights Branch, and
- . The Allston Branch.

In addition, it is recommended that the City Point, Jeffries Point, Memorial, Neponset, Phillips Brooks, South Boston, and Tyler Street Branches be eliminated as soon as possible during stage one.

The construction of the eight new buildings during the first half of the development program will accomplish three major objectives. First, all library facilities now located in rented quarters and most of those now in multi-purpose buildings will be replaced by separate, library-owned structures. Second, facilities which are now grossly inadequate in size and structural condition will be replaced by more useful structures. Third, improved facilities will be constructed in areas where the greatest additional use can be expected.

Stage Two:

Those new branch libraries which are to be constructed during the latter half of the program are:

- . Brighton,
- . Lower Mills,
- . Uphams Corner,
- . South End, and
- . Hyde Park.

The construction of these five new libraries is essentially a process of replacing existing structures which are reasonably well located but in only fair structural condition. At the time of completion of the first stage of branch library reconstruction these buildings will be in poorer condition and require replacement. At that time the three library-owned buildings will have an average age of over eighty years. The other two libraries are housed in municipal buildings and ultimately deserve to be relocated in separate library structures.



**Brighton Branch
Library (to be replaced)**



Mattapan Branch Library



Parker Hill Branch Library

Photo by Robert J. Keller



Connolly Branch Library

Photo by Robert J. Keller

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the City of Boston must now initiate a process of reconstructing its branch library system. The process recommended herein of elimination, consolidation, and new construction during the next twenty years will create a library system of twenty-seven branches (six fewer than the present thirty-three).

Fourteen of the twenty-seven library buildings are now in use and are to be retained; thirteen are proposed new structures.

The construction of thirteen new buildings over a period of twenty years is equivalent to approximately two new libraries every three years. This average rate of construction appears necessary if Boston is to maintain a useful and economically efficient branch library system.

Some of the more detailed proposals concerned with where and when new buildings should be constructed may, with the passing of time and the occurrence of unforeseeable circumstances, require revision. This is especially true of those proposals to be undertaken during the later years of the program.

When these revisions become necessary it is strongly recommended that they be consistent with the basic concepts of a city-wide plan. Only if the more immediate decisions of Boston's branch library reconstruction program conform with the goals of a comprehensive plan can full assurance be given that the end product, the best possible library system, will be made available to the people of Boston.

APPENDIX: The Branch Libraries of the Proposed System

This final section of the report summarizes in more detail the branch libraries which are to be the components of the proposed system.

The branch libraries to be retained because of their adequate structural condition, location, and use, are:

- . Adams Street: 690 Adams Street, Dorchester
- . Charlestown: 43 Monument Square, Charlestown
- . Codman Square: 6 Norfolk Street, Dorchester
- . Connolly: 433 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain
- . East Boston: 276 Meridian Street, East Boston
- . Egleston Square: 2044 Columbus Avenue, Roxbury
- . Faneuil: 419 Faneuil Street, Brighton
- . Jamaica Plain: 12 Sedgwick Street, Jamaica Plain
- . Kirstein Memorial: 20 City Hall Avenue, Boston
- . Mattapan: 10 Hazelton Street, Mattapan
- . North End: 3a North Bennett Street, Boston
- . Parker Hill: 1497 Tremont Street, Roxbury
- . Washington Village: 290 Old Colony Avenue, South Boston
- . West Roxbury: 1961 Centre Street, West Roxbury

The new branch libraries to be constructed are:

South Boston

New branch library to replace the present City Point Branch at 533 East Broadway and the existing South Boston Branch at 388 West Broadway.

The new library will supplant the facilities of two existing libraries, one presently in rented quarters and the other occupying space in a municipal building. The new library will soon be under construction on the old Lincoln School site on East Broadway. This new branch will serve from 35,000 to 40,000 people.

Dudley

New branch library to replace the present Mt. Pleasant Branch located in the municipal building at 335 Dudley Street.

The Mt. Pleasant Branch is located in extremely poor and small quarters on the first floor of a municipal building directly underneath a gymnasium. This condition, as has been previously pointed out, is not conducive to good library use. Although this branch was meant to serve a large number of people, it cannot properly do so because of its poor location and inadequate interior.

It is recommended that a new branch be built near the Dudley Street Terminal Shopping Area, preferably on the southeastern side. The new, more central location (near many MTA surface lines) is more accessible to a greater number of people and would be expected to cause a substantial rise in circulation and use of library facilities in Roxbury.



Interior Of Egleston Sq. Branch Library



Interior Of Roslindale Branch
Library (to be replaced)

Grove Hall

New branch library to replace the existing Mt. Bowdoin Branch located at 275 Washington Street.

The Mt. Bowdoin Library presently occupies a small, inadequate, rented building in the Mt. Bowdoin shopping area. This shopping area is smaller in size and attracts fewer people than the major centers nearby (Fields Corner and Codman Square which contain libraries, and Grove Hall which does not). It is proposed that the Mt. Bowdoin Branch be relocated in a new structure in the southeastern part of the Grove Hall shopping center which is more accessible to a greater number of shoppers and mass transportation riders. A new library at this proposed location, in conjunction with a new branch at Dudley (and the resultant elimination of the Memorial Branch) will provide a more satisfactory and efficient distribution of branch facilities throughout North Dorchester and Roxbury.

Roslindale

New branch library to replace the present facility in the municipal building at 4220 Washington Street.

This library serves a large number of people (35,000 to 40,000) and has the highest book circulation in the city. However, the present quarters are exceedingly crowded, poorly lighted, and poorly located directly beneath a gymnasium. As a result the branch cannot properly carry out a full library program.

A new branch library should be built in Roslindale Square near the present location. Tentative long-range fire station development plans indicate that the Roslindale fire house should be placed elsewhere. If these plans are carried out the present fire house site might be used for the new library building.

West End

New library to replace the present West End Branch located at 131 Cambridge Street.

The existing West End branch occupies a building originally constructed in 1806. The age and design of the building create operational and maintenance difficulties which limit the effectiveness of the library activities.

It is recommended that a new branch be constructed as part of the proposed West End Redevelopment Project. Thus the city would be able to construct a new building on the most appropriate site with federal financial assistance. The date of construction will depend upon completion and approval of the plans now being prepared by the Urban Redevelopment Division of the Boston Housing Authority.

When the new library is built it is contemplated that the present building shall be used and maintained for private institutional purposes, either as a church or historical edifice.

Fields Corner

New branch library to replace the existing facility in the municipal building at 1 Arcadia Street.

The library in Fields Corner shares a municipal building with Police Station #11, occupying the rear part of a 3-story structure constructed eighty years ago. Neither the exterior nor the interior is attractive or inviting. The entrance leads into a dark and gloomy library with facilities on each of the three floors (the only three-story branch in the entire system).

There can be little doubt but that a modern one-story facility on a more effective site would be more fully used by people living, shopping, and working in Fields Corner. It is proposed that a new building be constructed on a site nearer to, and on the north side of, the Fields Corner shopping center.

Orient Heights

New branch library to replace the present branch at 18 Barnes Avenue.

The Orient Heights Branch presently occupies a poorly located rented building which is in need of major repairs. The library is not in the Orient Heights shopping center and is not easily accessible to a large portion of its potential users (particularly those living in the Saratoga-Bennington Streets and Orient Avenue sections). Rather than invest additional maintenance and renovation funds in this building a new branch should be built within the shopping center. This new branch would serve from 15,000 to 20,000 people which is below the minimum standard mentioned in a previous section. However, the geographic characteristics of East Boston dictate the necessity of operating a small and inexpensive branch facility in this area.

Allston

New branch library to replace the existing branch at 161 Harvard Avenue.

The existing Allston Branch is situated in crowded rented quarters on the second floor of a commercial building in the center of the Allston shopping center. This general location has proved its usefulness and drawing power for the library enjoys a consistently high circulation of books. However, the long up-stairs climb and inadequate interior serve to deter many who would ordinarily make further use of these facilities.

It is recommended that a new branch be constructed as near as possible to the present location.

Brighton

New building to replace the present branch library at 40 Academy Hill Road.

The existing library is an archaic structure built in 1874, costly to maintain, and not well suited for modern library activities.

A new branch should be constructed on a site closer to, and if possible within, the Brighton shopping center. A modern structure on a more centrally located site adjacent to stores, mass transportation, and off-street parking facilities should improve the relatively low circulation per capita ranking the existing Brighton Branch now holds.



Interior Of Lower Mills Branch
Library (to be replaced)

Lower Mills

New branch library to replace the present branch at 1110 Washington Street.

The Lower Mills Branch, located in an antiquated structure built in 1871, served between six and eight thousand persons in 1950, according to the United States Population Census. This amount of potential users does not justify the maintenance and operational expenditures of a separate facility. However, the Lower Mills area is experiencing both residential and commercial development. This development may soon be of such quantity that a library in Lower Mills will serve more than fifteen thousand persons, a condition which would justify its retention. Therefore, it is recommended that: (a) the existing branch be temporarily retained, (b) a close watch be made of the growth of the Lower Mills area during the next ten years, (c) a final decision be made at that time regarding the retention of the branch facility, and (d) assuming that the potential growth will occur, the existing structure be replaced by a new building on a site to be determined by the pattern of both residential and commercial development.

Uphams Corner

New library to replace the existing facility in the municipal building at 500 Columbia Road.

The Uphams Corner Branch Library occupies space in the basement and on the first floor of the municipal building constructed in 1903. This building was not designed to house library facilities. For example, the children's section is located in an area that was originally designed for a swimming pool.

It is recommended that, following the construction of the higher priority projects described above, a new library be built to replace the existing library facility in the municipal building on, or near, the existing site.

South End

New branch library to replace the existing facility in the municipal building at 65 West Brookline Street.

The South End Branch is located in the basement of a municipal building erected in 1921. The gloomy basement atmosphere within which the library activities are carried out, and the detrimental influence of incompatible activities taking place on the upper floors (including a well used public bath, auditorium, and gymnasium) indicate the need for a separate branch library building.

It is recommended that a new South End library be constructed during the latter stages of the library system reconstruction program, conceivably as part of a future urban renewal project.

Hyde Park

New building to replace the present branch library at 35 Harvard Avenue.

The Hyde Park Branch Library was constructed in 1912. The building is structurally sound and capable of housing library activities for some time to come. However, the age and outmoded design will cause steadily increasing, and eventually, excessive maintenance and repair expenditures.

The construction of a new, more efficient building is programmed for the late stages of this library reconstruction process. The new building should be constructed near the present site but closer to Cleary Square so that it becomes part of both the shopping center and the civic center.



